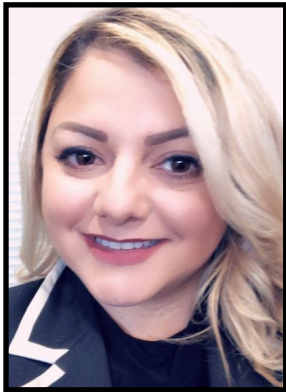


Tennessee Department of Transportation

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH El Mes de la Herencia Hispana September 15 – October 15

The Civil Rights Division is recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month



Employee Spotlight



Naomi L. Alicea

Region 2 Project Development, Right-of-Way Agent

She enjoys spending time with family, cooking, painting, and traveling to different places to learn about diverse cultures. Also, she enjoys learning new languages; her goal is to learn a third language within a couple of years.

Joined TDOT December 2015

Tell us about a moment in Hispanic History that influenced or shaped your career/life?

My Hispanic origins have influenced my life. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans are known for their warm hospitality, often considered very friendly and family-oriented people who enjoy a rich Spanish influence. Being Hispanic has played a significant role in defining who I am and how I view the world. The family is of utmost importance to us; our frequent family gatherings and Hispanic traditions have influenced my Experiences growing up. I cherish cooking unique traditional recipes passed down by my grandmother, mother, and aunts; plus, I like to share them with family and friends. Nothing is more flavorful and portrays my Hispanic heritage than a “*Pernil con Arroz con Gandules*” for our holiday parties. Puerto Ricans consider themselves American but are fiercely proud of their island and their culture.

Who within or outside TDOT has been influential in your career? Are they a mentor today?

My husband plays a significant role in my life. He inspires me everyday to be the best possible version of me. He motivates me to be better, do better, do more with life, follow my dreams, be passionate, and never give up, no matter how hard the path might be.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) that are listed within the Strategic Plan, resonates with you and with diversity? State why?

From the TDOT values, Family and Collaboration resonate the most with me. I believe that we all have different qualities and abilities that we can share from our diverse backgrounds. Celebrating our differences and common interest helps unite us and seeing ourselves as a family enhances our professional experience despite our differences.

Why is it important to recognize Hispanic Heritage Month, especially in 2021?

This years theme for Hispanic Heritage Month is *Esperanza*, which means Hope. I believe that celebrating Hispanic Heritage month in 2021 is exceptionally important because it gives us hope and inspires us to remember that we are stronger together. It also allows us to reflect on those who came before us, so we can preserve and create a better tomorrow.